

INTRODUCTION

One of every five acres of land within the several States and territories of the United States is owned by the National Government. This Federal area is equal in size to the combined areas of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Ohio, Alabama, Kentucky and Indiana. Most Federally-owned land is within the public domain, but approximately 35,000,000 acres have been acquired by negotiated purchase or condemnation proceedings. Limited areas also have been acquired through gifts from States and other political units, as well as from private sources, and by foreclosure or otherwise, in settlement of debts due the United States.

Lands of the public domain are within the custody of the Department of Interior. Most of the lands not forming a part of the public domain are under the control of the Department of Agriculture, having been acquired for various uses in the interest of agriculture, notably for experimental, re-settlement and conservation purposes. Other departments or agencies of the Government having custody of large areas are the War and Navy Departments and the Tennessee Valley Authority. For information concerning the land holdings of the several departments or agencies of Government, reference is invited to Appendix III.

The great increase in land acquisition by the Federal Government in recent years and the many new and varied uses for which land has been acquired have created the need for a better knowledge of the respective powers of the Federal and Local Governments within such areas.

Because of the diversity of Government uses for which lands are acquired by the United States and the lack of uniformity in the manner and scope of Federal jurisdiction granted by the States, situations are constantly arising wherein it is difficult to ascertain whether personal and property rights within such areas are to be determined by Federal or local law.

The question most often arising is whether a crime committed within such areas is punishable by Federal or local law; but a variety of other questions, equally difficult of solution, arise with respect to property rights and political privileges, such as the taxation of private property located within such areas, or the amenability of persons therein to State income and sales tax laws, to laws exacting occupational licenses and other assessments, local building and inspection laws, the right to vote in State elections of persons residing in such areas, and their right to enjoy equally with other citizens of the community the benefit of local school facilities or other advantages provided by local governments.

It is the purpose of this book to assist in finding convenient and authoritative answers to all such questions.

THE AUTHOR